PROTECTING MINORS -- BOUNDARIES:

“A limit or perimeter that defines us as individuals, separating us from others.”

Physical
Personal
Relationship

Without a clear understanding of healthy boundaries, children and adults can be tricked into trusting certain individuals or situations that may be inappropriate or unsafe.
**ESTABLISH & MODEL APPROPRIATE BOUNDARIES EARLY ON**

**Physical:**
- Respect for each person’s body & personal space
- Respect each individual’s right to say NO to any uncomfortable hug, tickle, pat on the buttocks.
- Avoid excessive physical attention and touching… backrubs, hugs, lap-sitting, cuddling, caresses, etc.

**Personal:**
- Avoid inappropriate questions, comments or suggestions
- Avoid sharing photographs or encouraging games that may have a sexual nature

**Relationship:**
- Don’t create a secretive friendship with a child
- Avoid using guilt tactics

*Sex offenders will often attempt to blur a boundary as part of their grooming process…*
Guidelines for Those Working with Children

Use common sense

You have a duty to the children you work with

You have a duty to the University to prevent accusations of abuse or improper behavior

- Never use any form of physical or emotional punishment to discipline children participating in a program
- Never engage in “rough house”, “horse play”, or sexually provocative games
- Don’t allow children to sit on your lap
- Don’t allow inappropriate touching between children
- Be aware of the impact of your words and language on young children
- Do not swear, use sexual innuendo or make a sexually suggestive comment – even in fun
- Do not allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Do not appear to favor one child more than the others
Guidelines for Those Working with Children

- Be aware of situations in which actions can be misconstrued or manipulated by others (i.e. being alone with the last child in class); conduct all dealings with children in a public environment as much as possible.

- Don’t spend “alone time” with a child away from others in their activities.

- Avoid being alone with a child, especially in a restroom or changing area.

- Follow the rule of 3 – Make sure another person is with you.

- If you are alone with a child in a changing or shower area, you should not be unclothed with a minor, bathing with a minor – ever – not even if another person is present.

- Be sure children use the buddy system when they go to the bathroom, on field trips, or when leaving the classroom area.

- Do not offer one-on-one transportation for a child.

- Never tell a child to keep a secret… “this is just between the two of us”
If a Child Discloses Abuse to you...

- Stay Calm
- Ensure that the child is safe and feels safe
- Assure the child you are taking what s/he say seriously
- Be honest; explain that you will have to tell someone else to help stop the abuse
- Avoid making promises you can’t keep
- Make a note of what the child has said as soon as possible
- Do not ask “leading questions”: Stick to who, what, when, where
- Do not investigate on your own
If a Child Discloses Abuse to You...

**ALWAYS REPORT:** JEP is committed to promoting the welfare of all who work with our programs, especially children (minors under the age of 18) who live in our community or who are served by our partners. As a JEP service-learning student or volunteer at any of our school or non-profit community partner sites, should you become aware of any instances of suspected child abuse you must immediately

1) report it to your Site Coordinator and
2) come into the JEP House and discuss this with a full-time professional staff member who will guide you through the university’s policy, which includes filing a report with both the USC Department of Public Service and the Department of Children and Family Services Child Protection Hotline or the Los Angeles Police Department.

Should you have any questions or concerns, contact:

- JEP school based participants: Brenda Pesante, JEP Director of Community Partnerships (pesante@usc.edu / 213.740.1836)
- ReadersPLUS tutors: Tina Koneazny, JEP Associate Director – Administration & Educational Outreach (koneazny@usc.edu / 213.740.1834)
- Community Based Organization (CBO) participants: Jacqueline Whitley, JEP Director of Non Profit Partnerships (jwhitley@usc.edu / 213.740.1829)